



Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
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PRESS RELEASE
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LA COUNTY DECLARES MAY 2 AS DAY TO CHANGE DIRECTION ***Day of Dialog and Global Summit to Help Identify the Five Signs of Emotional Suffering***

The LA County Board of Supervisors has proclaimed May 2nd as the “Day to Change Direction” for emotional wellbeing and has directed Jonathan Sherin, M.D. Ph.D., Director, LA County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), to oversee a countywide discussion to advance a culture of awareness, understanding and dialog around mental health issues and improve access to care for those living with a mental illness.

The county is partnering with the Campaign to Change Direction (ChangeDirection.org/engage-la/) to create opportunities to engage, educate and inspire, focusing on five specific populations: youth, veterans, homeless, refugees and immigrants and seniors.

This global campaign urges all to change the way we view mental health issues in our communities in five ways:

1. Create **dialogue** around: barriers around access to care, encouraging care of those we love and ourselves; and building community awareness.
2. **Learn the five signs of emotional suffering**, including: personality changes; uncharacteristic anger, anxiety, agitation or mood; isolation; poor self-care and risky behavior; and hopelessness.
3. **Learn healthy habits**: proper eating, sleeping and activity, get emotional check-ups; engage and connect wisely in relationships; relax to reduce stress; if you see the five signs of emotional suffering, reach out, connect and offer to help.
4. **Choose an idea to set the stage in your community**
5. **Get engaged**. Register at www.changedirection.org/engage-la/; take photos and post to social media using #ChangeMentalHealth; and share this with others.

The following events offer a way to participate in the campaign. Engagement activities will invite our county partners, corporate supporters, non-profit friends, celebrity champions – and everyday citizens – to join us at events across Los Angeles County.

May 2:

- 9:00 am - Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 W. Temple, **Press Conference** with Board Supervisors Ridley-Thomas, Barger, honoring Change Direction representatives (to be named), followed by panel discussion on mental health issues (8th floor balcony).
- Wellness Centers around the County – for list of events, click here (To attachment or calendar)

May 3:

7:30 am-4:30 pm – Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Bing Theater, 5905 Wilshire Blvd, **Global Summit on Mental Health Culture Change**. The entertainment community joins thought leaders and stakeholders for a day filled with conversations, performances and experiences. The Summit will explore cultural barriers across and within groups – and examine innovative programs, inspirational movements and unique opportunities. For more information: <http://www.changedirection.org/2017-global-summit/>

LACDMH promotes access to mental health services for all communities. If you would like info on programs or to speak with a multi-language subject matter expert, please contact pio@dmh.lacounty.gov

About the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest county-operated mental health department in the United States, directly operating 75 program sites and more than 100 co-located sites. Each year, it contracts with approximately 1,000 agencies and individual practitioners to provide a spectrum of mental health services to more than 250,000 residents of all ages. The Department's mission – enriching lives through partnership to strengthen our community's capacity to support recovery and resiliency – is accomplished by working with stakeholders and community partners to provide clinically competent, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental health services to clients in the least restrictive manner possible. For more information, visit <http://dmh.lacounty.gov>.

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